Applying to Dental/Medical Schools, 2015 entering class: General Considerations.

- Team Thomas and Markle, ECoS Advising Center
- Wednesday, January 29, 7:00 p.m.
- 102 Thomas Building

- With shared perspectives of Monica Angelucci and Ryan Henrici!
Where did our candidates get accepted in 2014?

Allopathic schools

- 2014 Entering Class: Allopathic Medical Schools (37) to which 133* Penn State students were accepted

  - Albert Einstein COM
  - Columbia University College of P & S
  - * Drexel University – 12
  - George Washington Univ. Sch of Med
  - Georgetown University
  - Indiana University Sch of Med
  - Marshall University
  - Medical College of Georgia
  - Medical University of South Carolina
  - New York University
  - * Penn State College of Medicine- Hershey – 17
  - Perelman Sch Med at U Penn
  - Rutgers NJ Medical School
  - Rutgers Robt. Wood Johnson Med Sch
  - * Sidney Kimmel Med Coll at T. Jefferson Univ– 30
  - SUNY Downstate
  - SUNY Upstate Medical University
  - * Temple University -16
  - * The Commonwealth Medical College (Scranton) -8
  - Tufts University
  - Uniformed Services Univ of Hlth Sciences
  - Universidad Central Del Caribe (PR)
  - University of Alabama
  - University of Central Florida
  - University of Chicago – Prtizker Sch Med
  - University of Illinois at Chicago
  - University of Maryland
  - University of Pittsburgh
  - University of Puerto Rico Sch Med
  - University of Rochester
  - University of Tennessee
  - University of Virginia
  - Virginia Commonwealth Univ Sch Med
  - Wake Forest School of Medicine
  - Warren Alpert Med Sch of Brown University
  - Weill Medical College of Cornell University
  - West Virginia University

* Five allopathic schools with the most accepted PSU students
...and osteopathic schools in 2014

- 2014 Entering Class: Osteopathic Medical Schools (15) to which 56* Penn State students were accepted.
  - A.T. Still University/ Missouri Campus
  - Arizona COM of Midwestern University
  - Campbell University SOM
  - Des Moines University COM
  - * Edward Via COM, all sites – 5
  - Kansas City University of Med. & Biosciences
  - Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine
  - Lincoln Memorial University – DeBusk COM
  - Marian University COM
  - * New York Institute of Technology COM - 6
  - * Philadelphia COM, all sites – 20
  - Rocky Vista University COM
  - Rowan University SOM

- University of New England COM
  - * West Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine- 6

- * Four Osteopathic schools with the most accepted PSU applicant
Gist of the process
medical school applications

- **Primary application** to AMCAS and/or ACOMAS. Earliest is first week of June. You begin filling it out earlier; read the agency’s instructions!
- You arrange for your **Penn State transcript** to go to AMCAS and/or ACOMAS. Their staff verifies the transcript against your application. Any schools in addition to Penn State – yes, you arrange for all college/university transcripts!
- **Secondary Applications** are from individual schools. Each school will have their own.
- **MCAT scores**: automatically sent by AAMC to the schools you list. Not required for primary application, but can list if known.
- **Letters of Evaluation, aka, Letters of Recommendation (LOR)**: Should be on the writer’s institutional letterhead, signed and dated, to avoid delays! These are part of the secondary app. These are **not** submitted with the primary application, but be prepared to identify the letter writers on your application.
- “Committee Letter” is a set / “Dr. Markle” as sole author on “AMCAS letters” inputs; this Committee Letter set goes out from our office via VirtualEvals. We do not use Interfolio.
- **Any additional letters??** (e.g. family friend/ family doctor) that are not routed via our office – you arrange transmittal of **“Individual Letters”** to the schools with the other individual letter writers. You provide the “AMCAS Letter Request” form to your letter writer for routing the letter. Do note that not all schools use the AMCAS Letter routing process.
- **To prevent delays**, follow instructions–and be clear & concise in your own communications!
Medical School Application considerations & planning

- **Right now:** You should solicit letters of recommendation (LOR). We request LORs from 2 science faculty you’ve had a B,C,P,M class with and 1 non-science LOR faculty person.
- **Why?** *Because this is what schools expect to receive in support of your application.*
- **Other LORs?** *Yes! Research mentor, volunteer supervisor, etc. – other credible perspectives of your candidacy and qualifications.*
- **AMCAS and ACOMAS Instructions:** 2015 still on-line/ PDF. 2016 not yet posted.
- **What to expect ...next slide.**
From the 2015 AMCAS Instruction Manual

- You’ll find 9 Sections in the AMCAS Application (truncated overview for this talk)
  - 1. Identifying Information
  - 2. Schools Attended – high school and college
  - 3. Biographic Information
  - 4. Course Work
    Enter information, grades, and credits for every course that you have enrolled in at any U.S., U.S. Territorial, or Canadian post-secondary institution.
  - 5. Work/Activities – max of 15 some of which you will designate as your “most meaningful” experiences.
  - 6. Letters of Evaluation (see next slide)
    Add letters of evaluation contact information. THE LETTERS ARE NOT SUBMITTED AT THIS TIME, ONLY IDENTIFYING AUTHOR OF THE COMMITTEE LETTER (PSU Committee Letter/Dr. Markle as sole author).
  - 7. Medical Schools
  - 8. Personal Statement
  - 9. Standardized Tests Use this section to review MCAT scores and more.
Section Six: Letters of Evaluation (truncated also, ref pp. 60 – 61 in 2015)

The Letters of Evaluation section of the application is designed to give you the opportunity to indicate who will be writing letters on your behalf. A letter of evaluation is a letter in which the author assesses your qualities, characteristics, and capabilities.

Committee Letter: A letter authored by a pre-health committee or pre-health advisor and intended to represent your institution’s evaluation of you. A Committee Letter may or may not include additional letters written in support of your application. This is sometimes called a Composite Letter.


Individual Letter: This is your option for a letter writer whose LOR will not be part of the set at our office for the Committee Letter.
Health Preprofessions Committee Interview & Letter of Evaluation

- AMCAS assigns a single ID number for the Committee Letter as you prepare your Primary Application; list **only** Dr. Markle as author; do not list the other letter writers in your set. The other letters on file get a “free ride” as part of the Committee Letter.
- Our office will need this Letter ID number, bring to your interview.
- **To schedule the PSU Committee Interview:** your Biographical sketch, draft personal statement, with **recent photo** plus at least three letters must be received at our office.
- We expect to begin scheduling in April for interviews from May to late September. There will be a some “black out dates”.
- A compilation letter is created from our interview, the biosketch, the transcript, the MCAT scores (if available) PLUS the individual faculty letters (and others) that you have solicited.
- The full letter set of is routed to medical schools as the “Committee Letter.” Yes, the set is more than one (1) letter – the set includes the LORs you have solicited.
- We do not triage the faculty letters. Our office can not customize the letter set for individual schools.
- Note: Any letters going directly to schools - you will need to provide the letter writer with the AMCAS Letter Request Form (with the bar coded ID number) for an “**Individual Letter**”. You list this author on your Primary Application for the Individual Letter.
So, what makes a “good” letter?

- The **most informative letters** are from PSU faculty and other writers who got to know you from class participation, office hour chats, regular class discussions, presentations, group projects, the research lab, the teaching lab and/or student organizations, sometimes through extracurricular activities germane to human services and/or healthcare settings!

- **A few competencies cited by AAMC:**
  - Can your letter writer comment, for example, on …
  - Your critical thinking and quantitative reasoning skills, effective written communications and scientific inquiry knowledge & facility
  - Interpersonal skills/ social skills, cultural awareness -recognizing factors affecting human interactions, having a service orientation & teamwork for common goals
  - Ethical responsibility to yourself & others, reliability & dependability, resilience & adaptability, striving for improvement
Recurring questions on Letters of Recommendation

- **Waive/ not waive right to the letter?** This office strongly recommends soliciting only confidential letters from your writers.
- I’m not sure Dr. XYZ will write a positive letter. **Ask someone else!**
- **My lab TAs know me best. Are they okay?** Sometimes. We recommend asking the professor in charge of a lab course. She/He may collaborate with the graduate TA on a letter. You want your letters to be as credible as possible at an Admissions Committee meeting.
- I transferred from another campus or institution, no one knows me here. Writers from other sites can be part of the overall set. We encourage you to bear in mind that when applying from University Park, it would not be good to lack faculty writers from U.P. Admissions committees expect input from the campus where the undergraduate degree is/was earned.
- **Our process strives to mirror a letter set that admissions committees anticipate:**
  - We recommend soliciting letters from faculty in two sciences who you’ve had for a class (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics, or o-chem are the core prerequisites, consider also biochemistry, calculus, statistics).
  - We recommend one non-science faculty letter, someone whose class you took.
- **Reality checks:**
  - a) Clearly other courses outside the core prerequisites are also challenging science courses. These are fine! E.g., biochemistry, microbiology, immunology, upper division nutritional sciences.
  - b) **Large sections?** Talk to your professor now about your intentions and if she/he can write a letter on your behalf. You can suggest providing her/him with a resume and meeting to discuss your candidacy, motivations, goal, preparations, etc..
Some “Goofs” we observe

**DO NOT DELAY YOUR PRIMARY APPLICATION WHILE AWAITING YOUR COMMITTEE INTERVIEW!** Submit your primary application as soon as you are committed to the application cycle!

- Career Services can do mock interviews, video recorded and deconstructed for your improvement.
- Clear and cleanly prepared Biographical sketch, directions followed, professional attire & presentation at interview. Proofread!
- Being respectful of those who work hard on your behalf – the staff of the ECoS Advising Center!
- To your letter writers: Signed/ Dated letters on institutional letterhead; hard copy sent to our office is preferred!
- Letter Request Form: We always recommend requesting confidential letters
- Follow up with your letter writers AND our main office staff on receipt of LORs.
- Despite the best intentions, some writers “drop the ball”. Have alternate writers in mind, more than the minimum of 3 and follow up with them!
- For a more timely submission, consider abridging your letter set and pursue “individual letters” as appropriate with late letter writers.
Q & A

- We will post this evening’s presentations to the premedicine website.